

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. James Napoli on 15 June 2011.

The application has been amended as follows:

Claim 1, line 8: after "cation", —; and

said hydrogel having a solidification time of less than 120 seconds upon contact with the solution or suspension and having a blood absorbance of at least 10 g/g— is added.

Claim 2 is canceled.

Claims 1, 15, 17-21, 24 and 26-30 are allowed.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: with respect to independent claim 1, a thorough search of the prior art of record did not disclose any reference, alone or in combination with other references that teaches or fairly suggests the following:

a hydrogel comprising superabsorbent particles coated with a hydrophobic compound and a multivalent cation in combination with wherein the hydrophobic compound is a hydrophobicized silica. The closest prior art of record is US 4,286,082 to Tsubakimoto et al. Tsubakimoto discloses a hydrogel blended with hydrophobic silica and monovalent compounds.

Claim 1 is directed to an allowable product. Pursuant to the procedures set forth in MPEP § 821.04(B), claims 17-21, directed to the process of making or using an allowable product, previously withdrawn from consideration as a result of a restriction requirement, are hereby rejoined and fully examined for patentability under 37 CFR 1.104.

Because all claims previously withdrawn from consideration under 37 CFR 1.142 have been rejoined, **the restriction requirement as set forth in the Office action mailed on 12 August 2008 is hereby withdrawn.** In view of the withdrawal of the restriction requirement as to the rejoined inventions, applicant(s) are advised that if any claim presented in a continuation or divisional application is anticipated by, or includes all the limitations of, a claim that is allowable in the present application, such claim may be subject to provisional statutory and/or nonstatutory double patenting rejections over the claims of the instant application. Once the restriction requirement is withdrawn, the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 121 are no longer applicable. See *In re Ziegler*, 443 F.2d 1211, 1215, 170 USPQ 129, 131-32 (CCPA 1971). See also MPEP § 804.01.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled “Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance.”

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ginger T. Chapman whose telephone number is (571)272-4934. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday 10:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tatyana Zalukaeva can be reached on (571) 272-1115. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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06/17/2011

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3761